



Outside-only tours of the cottage are now available on the second Sunday of each month. A yard sign helps with social distancing.

THE COTTAGE AND COVID-19

GUESTBOOK ENTRIES FIND PEOPLE MAKING THE MOST OF PANDEMIC LIVES

May 13, 2020

We got married in the midst of a global pandemic on May 9, 2020, with guests from Switzerland, Vancouver, British Columbia, Seattle, Montreal, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Texas — all with us through the internet.

We had meant to marry on the summer solstice and honeymoon in Paris and Sicily. But alas, our plans were thwarted.

By a stroke of luck two nights had opened here at the cottage, and we spent some glorious days watching the birds,

FROM THE GUESTBOOK

soaking in Frank Lloyd Wright's brilliance and playing and singing by the fire. We are grateful to you all for preserving this gem and thank you for our wonderful stay.

We are both artists, and to be surrounded by art and love is

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WRITINGS

WRITINGS is a semi-annual publication of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy Inc.

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SETH PETERSON COTTAGE CONSERVANCY INC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- President: Kermit Traska
- First Vice President: Bill Martinelli
- Second Vice President: James Booth
- Treasurer: Catherine Sperl
- Secretary: Paul Wagner

MEMBERS

Claire Barnett, Jim Draeger, Tim Heggland, Melissa Kincaid, Dr. Steven Kincaid, Carolyne Kotchi, Marc Londo and Beth Zondag-Traska

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

- Mark Blakeslee, President Mirror Lake Association
- Ryder Will, Superintendent Mirror Lake State Park

CONSERVANCY STAFF

- Office Manager: Ron Dakter
- Marketing Coordinator: Gail Kohl

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Sand County Service Co.: (800) 822-7768

CONTACT US

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Email: SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com
Cottage voicemail: (877) 466-2358



Bert D. Goderstad, of Hastings, Minn., remembers his childhood friend, Seth Peterson, in the 2016 documentary 'The Jewel in the Woods.'

PETERSON RECORDS DONATED TO COTTAGE CONSERVANCY'S ARCHIVE

In the spring 2020 issue of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy newsletter, we reported with great sadness the passing of Bert Goderstad.

Bert was a childhood friend of Seth, and they shared many adventures together exploring the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.

When Seth died in 1960, his parents gave Bert all of Seth's materials related to the construction of the cottage. It was always Bert's intention that his collection of Seth Peterson Cottage material would be donated to the Cottage archives.


We are very grateful to Bert's wife, Margaret, and their son, Todd, for giving that material to the cottage. The material includes: two sets of the original construction drawings for the cottage; the original colored pencil perspective drawing of the cottage; a binder containing letters between Seth and Wright's secretary Gene Maselink; letters between Seth and



Seth Peterson, in his high school graduation photo

Bert pertaining to the cottage; and much other material that Seth had collected over the years.

Bert also had two books inscribed to Seth by Wright and one book inscribed to Seth by Olgianna Lloyd Wright that Bert had given to conservancy board member Bill Martinelli. That book also will be given to the cottage archive in the future.

We will always be grateful to Bert for his dedication to the restoration and continued management of the cottage; and to Margaret and Todd for their generous donation to its history. 

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kermit Traska

There's good news and there's bad news.

The good news is that guests following through on their reservations remains strong. With a few reservations lost in March and April, guests have been enjoying their stay at the Seth Peterson Cottage.

Our rental agency has provided extra cleaning services between stays. Guests have experienced few problems with their stay in the Lake Delton and Wisconsin Dells area.

The bad news is that, since March, we have not been able to hold an open house. This has disappointed many people who, in many cases, have come some distance just to view this Wright design.

The cottage is located in Mirror Lake State Park. According to our lease agreement with the state, we must follow its guidelines for interacting with the public. It does not look good for providing guided tours for the open houses for the remainder of this year.

However, because you can walk the trails in state parks, you are able to walk around and view the cottage from outside on open house days, which are held the second Sunday of each month.


This issue of our newsletter includes an article announcing the Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award. The award seeks applications from owners or organizations that have done substantial work to restore a Wright or Prairie School building. Please spread the word to encourage people to complete and send in their applications.

Requirements for board members include an interest in Wright's work and, specifically, the Seth Peterson Cottage.

As the year comes to a close, we want to thank one of our long-time conservancy board members for his service to the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. Paul Wagner, a Taliesin fellow and life-long architect, joined the board and soon accepted the treasurer's position, although his skills were more in architecture than bookkeeping.

He has decided to not run for re-election to the board at the expiration of his current term. Thank you, Paul, for a job well done, and best wishes for future endeavors.

This vacancy creates the opportunity for another person to join the board of directors for the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy. Requirements for board members include an interest in Wright's work and, specifically, the Seth Peterson Cottage. Have an interest in joining the board? Send an email to: SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com.

As we travel through these uncertain times, we hope you'll stay well and keep in your thoughts the support of the Seth Peterson Cottage and all of Wright's work. 

MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

By Ryder Will, Park Supervisor

I hope this article finds everyone well.

We have closed out another summer season at Mirror Lake State Park, and it certainly has been an unusual one. With the response to COVID-19 and widespread public health concerns, we operated in a variety of new and adjusted ways. Some of the unusual things this summer included a delayed opening to our campgrounds, shelters and accessible cabin. We also were unable to open our park office for public access, and we had to keep playgrounds closed all summer.

Despite these operational changes, our staff remained hard at work across the park, providing excellent service to visitors. Even with the office closed, staff answered the phones and sold admission stickers that were mailed out to customers. Our maintenance staff cleaned buildings, mowed the grass, took care of the park facilities and worked on many projects around the park. Park rangers and conservation wardens patrolled the park and ensured a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors.

Summer months saw what is sure to be record attendance. Our campgrounds were full every weekend — which is common — and were three-quarters full or more during the weekdays — which is less common.

Additionally, we needed to close the park for day-use access many weekends, due to reaching capacity. That meant that we had filled all our available parking and that facilities were at the limit of what they can support.

I think many people were looking for a place where they felt safe getting out of the house. The park was where they chose to go.

The visitation totals for the summer are yet to come in, and it remains to be seen how everything will come out in the end. As I mention above, we saw very high attendance for several months, but we were completely closed for several weeks and missed almost two months of the camping season.

The high use across the rest of the season will hopefully be enough to make up for some of the lost revenue. I mention revenue because even though we are a part of a state agency, the Wisconsin state park system operates on revenue generated through our use fees and not with tax dollars.

Even though we are winding down our high-use season, the park will remain busy in the fall as our visitors enjoy viewing fall colors, hiking, boating and camping. The park will see many people skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing and (for folks braver than me) camping in the winter months.

Many of our staff are leaving or have left to return to school, but we have a dedicated group of full- and part-time staff that are at the park year-round to keep things in great shape. It has been a very unusual year, and I imagine that will continue into the fall and beyond.

The dedication of our staff to providing a safe and enjoyable

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© Brian R. Hannan

FROM THE GUESTBOOK

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the perfect antidote to being in a pandemic.

Thanks Again
Tim & Amy

May 15, 2020

What a beautiful respite from a crazy world. We booked so many years ago and never imagined we would be staying at a time when solitude is not only life-affirming but potentially life-preserving.

It was not the romantic getaway we originally envisioned, but the family time was wonderful nonetheless. We enjoyed the many feathered visitors, the beautiful lake and the incredible scen-

ery. The dawning day looks to be a perfect one, and we are so grateful.

I can't imagine a more memorable birthday.

Thank you
Pete, Fran, Sylvia & Alexa

July 14, 2020

When Travis booked this stay 2½ years ago, we never could have imagined how needed an isolated retreat would be in July 2020. We ditched our children and the news, and had the most glorious raining two-night stay.

We managed a canoe ride during a break in the rain but otherwise did absolutely nothing but enjoy each other and this sweet little cottage.

A highlight was watching the sunset last night. The reflection of the silhouetted trees on the windows was almost

more beautiful than the sunset itself.

We feel honored and privileged to have stayed in such a magical place. We feel rested and recharged and ready to go back to the city.

The Seth Peterson Cottage has grounded us amidst this wildly transformative time in a chaotic world.

Thank you
Hannah & Travis
Minneapolis

August 18, 2020

Our stay was tied in with a tour of Taliesin, which we highly recommend to fully appreciate all things Frank Lloyd Wright.

Who would have thought over two years ago the timing would be a perfect respite from the sheltered, immobility of a global pandemic? This stay was per-

fect, absolutely serene and a chance to not stare at screens all day. Thank you to the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy for your efforts to restore the site and allow others to enjoy Wright's artwork.

Stay well, friends!
Allison & Chris

August 24, 2020

Wow, how lucky are we!

We have long talked about staying here, so when we saw an open Monday and Tuesday night back in June, we booked immediately and are so glad we did.

After spending Monday at Taliesin, we arrived at the cottage just in time for a 4 p.m. glass of wine.

Tuesday, we canoed and read, watching the sunshine through these glorious windows.

Through both evenings we played cribbage, talked about Wright and listened to the cicadas. We spotted only one raccoon and many birds at the feeder.

We took a night walk down the driveway to come back up to see the glowing in the dark. This getaway was truly a breath of fresh air, offering respite during a time that feels so wholly unpredictable.

Our thanks go to everyone who made and makes this place possible. We are rested, we are grateful, and we are ready.

Rachel & Nick
Minneapolis



The quote for the 2021 commemorative coffee mug was submitted by Brian R. Hannan, the editor/designer of this newsletter.



© Brian R. Hannan

Kermit Traska, left, and Bill Martinelli, right, sign a new 15-year lease with the state of Wisconsin on behalf of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy.

CONSERVANCY RENEWS STATE LEASE TO MANAGE THE PETERSON COTTAGE

In July, Kermit Traska and Bill Martinelli, president and first vice president, respectively, of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy signed a new 15-year lease with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The original lease for this unique public/private operation was drafted and signed in 1989 and subsequently renewed in 2004.

Thousands of guests have been able to enjoy a stay in this work of art, and many more have enjoyed educational tours. By entering into a third 15-year lease, the conservancy is agreeing to continue to restore, manage and operate the cottage through 2035.

ENTRIES SOUGHT FOR 2021 AWARD

PROGRAM RECOGNIZES SIGNIFICANT PAST WORK IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The deadline for applications for the 2021 Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award is March 15, 2021.

The award, given by the directors of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, is presented every other year to an individual or organization in recognition of past work in historical preservation of a Frank Lloyd Wright or Prairie School building in Wisconsin or a contiguous state. In general, buildings constructed between 1900 and 1925 are given preference, and the restoration work shall have been substantially completed within the two calendar years previous to the year of application. The 2019 award will be given for work done during 2018 and 2019.

The award is in the amount of \$5,000 and includes recognition at the Seth Peterson Cottage.

There is no specific application form. Applicants are asked to support their submission with the following information: a statement fully describing the restoration project that includes its state of completion; a supporting statement from the building contractor and/or architect; a letter or letters of support from scholars and/or working professionals familiar with the project; photographic evidence of work completed; and any other pertinent supporting materials. Submissions will be judged by a panel of members of the Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, along with several outside experts/scholars.

The award recipient will be announced on April 11, 2021, and the award presented on June 13, 2021.

The award is named in honor of Kristin Visser, who was one of the people instrumental in the restoration of the Seth Peterson Cottage and a tireless worker on its behalf. She is the author of "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School in



Wisconsin," and, with John Eifler, A.I.A., "Frank Lloyd Wright's Seth Peterson Cottage: Rescuing a Lost Masterwork." Visser, a planner for the Wisconsin State Department of Natural Resources, died in 1998 at the age of 48.

The Seth Peterson Cottage is Wright's final Wisconsin commission (1958) and, at only 880 square feet, one of his smallest. It was rescued from ruin by the concerted efforts of a local group of lakeshore property owners, spearheaded by Audrey Laatsch, and restored through a public/private partnership.

The inaugural award was given in 2007 to Steve Sikora and Lynette Erickson-Sikora for their work in restoring the Willey House, in Minneapolis.

The 2009 award was granted to Paul A. Harding and Cheryl Harding for their work in restoring the Davenport House, in River Forest, Illinois.

The 2011 award was presented to Mary Arnold and Henry St. Maurice for their work on the E. Clarke Arnold

Above left: Kristin Visser

Above: The Kristin Visser Historical Preservation Award plaque

Residence in Columbus, Wisconsin.

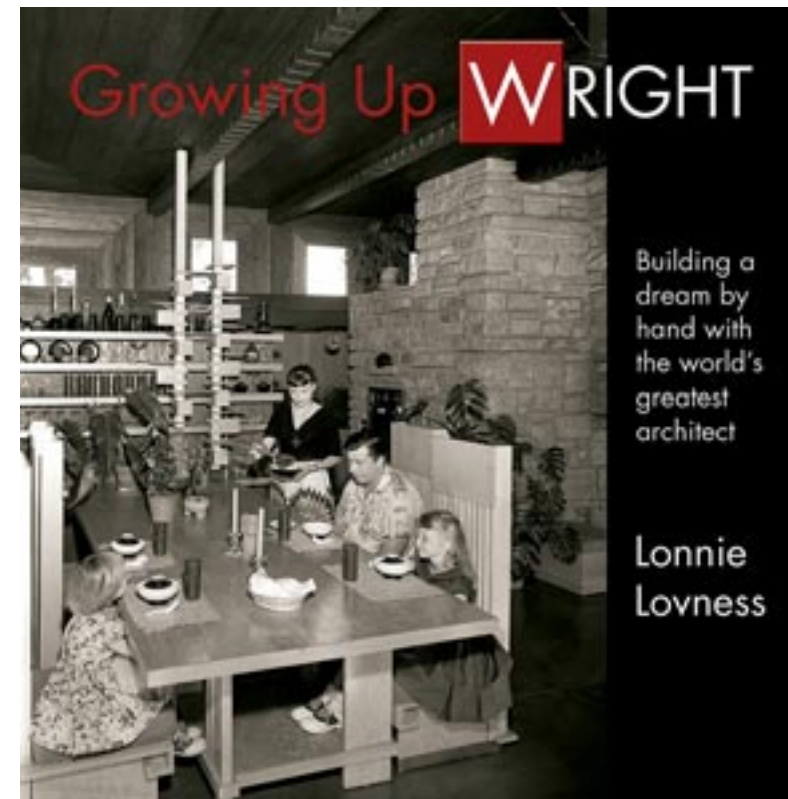
The 2013 award was presented to Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin for the restoration of the B-1 American System-Built home in Milwaukee.

The 2015 award was given to John Eifler and Bonnie Phoenix for the restoration of the Ross House in Glencoe, Illinois.

The 2017 award was given posthumously to Gene Szymczak for his restoration of the Thomas P. Hardy House in Racine, Wisconsin.

The 2019 award was given to Doug LaBrecque for his restoration of the Curtis and Lillian Meyer House in Galesburg, Michigan.

Send applications to: Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy, 400 Viking Drive, Reedsburg, WI 53959-1466. Questions? SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com.



'GROWING UP WRIGHT'

BOOK TELLS MINNESOTA FAMILY'S STORY OF BUILDING 2 HOUSES DESIGNED BY WRIGHT

In this new book, Lonnie Lovness tells the story of her parents, Don and Virginia Lovness, who built two Frank Lloyd Wright-designed homes by hand, beginning in 1956.

Although their friendship with Frank Lloyd Wright was brief — lasting only four years until his death in 1959 — Wright had a special fondness for his "do-it-yourself couple," as he liked to call them. Of special interest to Seth Peterson Cottage fans is chapter eight of the book. It tells the definitive story of the Lovness Cottage and how it came to be and its relationship to the Seth Peterson Cottage. Sales of the book are scheduled to begin this month.

For any Seth Peterson Cottage fans, this book is a must have for your book collection.

Visit www.growingupwright.com for publication information.

MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK REPORT

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experience to park visitors remains a constant. I can't say enough how much the efforts and flexibility of staff have been appreciated this season.

Mirror Lake State Park and the rest of the state park system remain a vital part of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin.

As you feel comfortable, I hope you will take the opportunity to visit Mirror Lake or any of the other great state parks in Wisconsin.

As always, thank you for your interest in and dedication to the Seth Peterson Cottage. I am proud that the cottage is here at Mirror Lake State Park and that so many have gotten the chance to experience it.

Take care.

MIRROR LAKE ASSOCIATION REPORT

By Mark Blakeslee, President

The summer of 2020 has been different and more difficult than any of the past. With the COVID-19 virus out there as a threat to our health, the Mirror Lake Association cancelled all of our social activities this summer to maintain a safe environment.

We were able to continue our conservation work, even though we had to delay the start of some of that work. We did

get our spring road clean-up work accomplished - thanks to volunteers who went out on their own to do the work on various days in May.

We started lake water testing in mid-summer when the labs that read the tests opened. Previously they were closed as a non-essential service. In mid-summer when machine parts stores began opening up, we could buy the needed supplies to start-up our lake harvester for the year and began harvesting about a month late. Fortunately, the weather cooperated and the lake vegetation didn't grow much early on, so the delay didn't create too big a problem.

We did decide to not operate our Clean Boats, Clean Waters program that checks incoming boats for invasive species. That work requires a lot of personal contact, and we didn't want to risk any of our staff to any preventable risk.

All of these important lake conservation projects will get underway again next year, so we continue to monitor and maintain Mirror Lake.

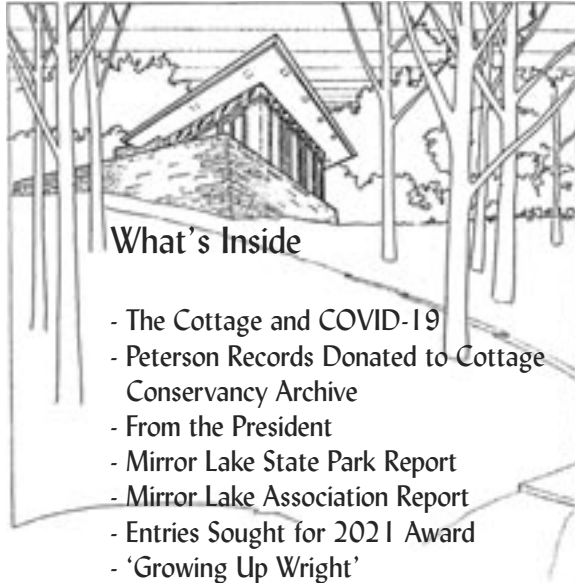
Even with this virus, Mirror Lake was a busy place all summer with kayakers, canoers and people just getting out on the lake! Probably one of the busiest summers I can remember. I bet people thought being on the lake was a good way to get out of the house while maintaining social distancing. I couldn't agree with them more!

As always, I'd love to hear your feedback. If you have any thoughts or comments, please give me a call or send me an e-mail. My cellphone number is (608) 575-4652, and my e-mail is: markblakeslee57@gmail.com.

WRITINGS

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Address Service Requested



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Want to learn more about Frank Lloyd Wright's work in Wisconsin? Visit WrightInWisconsin.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Seth Peterson Cottage Open House and Guided Tour

Tours are typically held on the second Sunday of every month, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., and cost \$5. While interior tours are currently suspended because of COVID-19, you can see the cottage from the outside. Visit our website or Facebook page for information about when tours will resume.

Seth Peterson Cottage Conservancy members receive free admission and a discount of 10 percent off cottage merchandise.

Annual Meeting & Volunteer Recognition

• 4 p.m. December 13. If you're interested in attending, please contact us at (877) 466-2358 or send an email to SethPetersonCottage@gmail.com.

✓ Visitors find touring the cottage a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Take a scenic drive and experience firsthand this restored Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home

during the open house tours held each month.

For more information about the cottage, visit us online at SethPeterson.org.

Seth Peterson Cottage

E9982 Fern Dell Road
Lake Delton, Wisconsin

